

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: April 14, 2017

Agenda Item: The Nature Conservancy Recreational Management Area Access Biennial Rule (R2)

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 Min

Background

This proposal would extend for two years the Nature Conservancy Recreation Management Area biennial rule previously established by the Fish and Wildlife Commission in August 2015. This rule represents no change from the previous biennial rule. During the winter of 2015 MTFWP met with The Nature Conservancy to discuss ideas for a possible land recreation management plan for their 163,883 acres in Missoula and Powell counties including their Clearwater – Blackfoot Project acquisition of 117,152 acres purchased from former Plum Creek Timber Company in January 2015. The proposed renewal of this biennial rule will provide continued year-round recreational access for public use.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Public notice of the rules and a public comment period began with the February 10, Commission adoption and ended March 15. One comment was received that appeared to misunderstand the proposal. These rules would apply only to TNC lands.

Alternatives and Analysis

Managed public access will reduce resource damage, prevent vehicular damage to soils and vegetation, and will avoid excess disturbance to native wildlife including threatened and endangered species. Without these rules, TNC may close these lands to public access.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends the Commission adopt the biennial rule as final. This rule will reduce the resource damage, prevent vehicular damage to soils and vegetation, and will avoid excess disturbance to native wildlife including threatened and endangered species.

Proposed Motion

I move that the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt renew the proposed biennial recreational use rules for The Nature Conservancy's Recreation Management Area Lands.